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To: Microsoft ATR,attorney.general@po.state.ct.us@inet...
Date: 1/24/02 12:20pm
Subject: MICROSOFT SETTLEMENT

DATE: January 24, 2002

TO: microsoft.atr@usdoj.gov

ATT: RITA B. HESSE

FROM: Louise Keane
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RE: MICROSOFT SETTLEMENT

I cannot accurately speak to all my specific concerns about the pending Microsoft case because I am not technically proficient enough to do that. Some of my concerns relate to problems I am having using a Macintosh computer from home, which I have only been doing since the end of November, 2001. Clearly, some of my problems arise from the fact that my new computer is not a Microsoft product. I am just beginning to see some of the problems I am having that may be related to the fact that Microsoft has such rigid control of the home computer market.

I have had this computer for less than two months, but have encountered various problems because it is not a Microsoft product. I have difficulty sending and receiving some kinds of e-mail. AOL, my Internet service provider tells me that the problem exists because my version of AOL cannot perform certain functions for the Mac. Attempts to download various files over the Internet have also been thwarted because either the Internet site or AOL cannot accommodate an interface with my Mac.

I know that I could buy a software package from Microsoft that would allow my computer to emulate a Microsoft product, but I find that solution irritating and unsatisfactory. Why shouldn't the Internet sites and service providers be totally compatible with both Microsoft and Macintosh products? Is it because 90% of their clients use Microsoft?

I made the choice of a Macintosh partly because the first small computers that I ever used (in the early 1980's) were Apples. They were efficient, easy to use, and I was familiar with them. Just over four years ago, when I changed jobs, I had to adjust to Microsoft computers because those were the computers that were available in my new workplaces.

When purchasing my Macintosh computer for home this past fall, there were only three possible vendor choices within a twenty-mile radius of my home. I

began at the closest location, a Circuit City. In that store, the particular model in which I was interested was disconnected from any power source, making it unavailable for me to try out. Attempts to flag-down a sales person were fruitless, and I decided to try to find a store that would be more helpful for me.

I ultimately had to go to a store that Iâ??d hoped to avoid, that was a twenty mile drive from my house. I hoped it would be worth the drive and the trouble and that the staff would seem more knowledgeable and available to help me.

Had I not been so determined to buy an Apple product, Iâ??m sure I could have gone to any number of closer locations to purchase a Microsoft computer.

I am thinking about buying a new mouse and an external disk drive for my computer. Were they Microsoft brand, I would have many options at the Circuit City store about 8 miles from my house. I could probably even buy the components from an office supply store.

When people hear about the problems I have encountered, I feel sure that they will be even more likely to avoid buying non-Microsoft computer equipment. They will not want to be bothered with these kinds of things. The fact that Apple has a smaller share of the current market will probably only prove to ensure that their market share will continue to decrease with time unless something is done to turn this situation around.

I donâ??t know how this can be done, but to continue to allow Microsoft to run as they are currently running, will do nothing to encourage competitive companies to even try to come to market. As long as Microsoft continues to dominate the market for small computers, vendors will continue to ignore the handful of us non-Microsoft users. We will be left to purchase Microsoft programs to assist us.

The Microsoft Corporation doesnâ??t seem to realize that they have been charged with operating unlawfully as regards the antitrust laws of the nation. Have they yet even attempted to make any recompense for those violations beyond an offer to extend their corporate influence further into disadvantaged schools by furnishing those schools with refurbished Microsoft equipment? Why did they not offer instead to purchase Macintosh equipment for those schools, in the interest of lessening their dominance in the market?

Unless Microsoftâ??s operating system and applications systems are separated, and unless more technical information about the operating system is made available to those who wish to promote competing products, Microsoft will continue to increase its grip on the computer purchasing public and to increase its influence on the access to the Internet.

I hope that the initial promise we saw at the dawn of the computer age will not diminish. We need to encourage creative minds to feel rewarded for

innovation, growth, and development. We want to continue to see true expansion of communication in all directions, not limitations and obstructions imposed by a small controlling group.

I put my trust very firmly behind Richard Blumenthal, Connecticut's Attorney General. I hold out hope that he will be able to help us to determine what is the right thing to do. He has become an uncompromising champion of THE PUBLIC INTEREST. He is reluctant to let Microsoft off the hook for their blatant disregard of antitrust law and their continuing arrogance and abuse of monopoly power. I know that he will bring many urgent concerns to your attention.

cc: Richard Blumenthal, Attorney General, State of Connecticut
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